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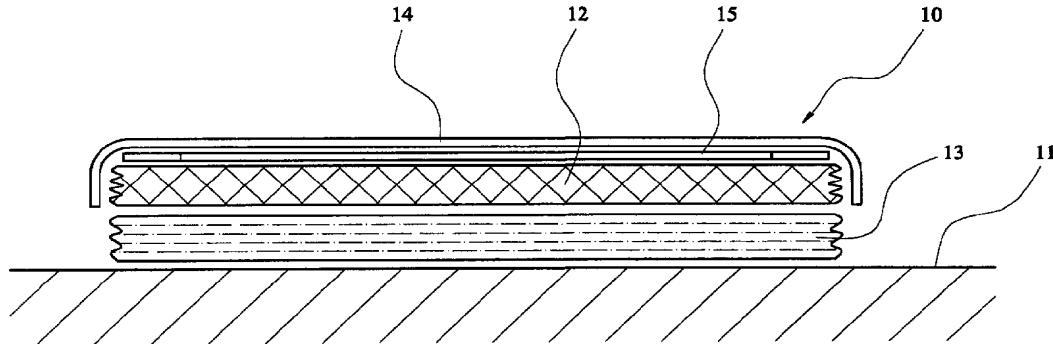
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(54) Title: FLEXIBLE DISPLAY PANEL FOR APPLICATION TO VEHICULAR OR PEDESTRIAN SURFACE



(57) Abstract: A flexible display panel (10) can be applied to a concrete or other vehicular or pedestrian support surface (11). The panel (10) is formed of a laminated assembly which comprises a fibrous backing layer (12) capable of carrying a printed image, a bituminous foundation layer (13), which adheres the display panel (10) to the concrete, and transparent wear and weather resistant top coating layer (14).

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**FLEXIBLE DISPLAY PANEL FOR APPLICATION
TO VEHICULAR OR PEDESTRIAN SURFACE**

This invention relates to a flexible display panel or
5 "image" for application to a vehicular or pedestrian
surface (i.e. a surface over which vehicles or pedestrians
can or may run), such as a parking surface in a vehicle
car park, or a road surface, pathway, corridor, hard
standing area, footpath; and also upright surfaces such
10 as the exposed faces of columns or walls.

It is of course well known to erect display panels
alongside the public highway, or on buildings, and also to
provide free-standing display or advertising panels on or
15 adjacent to pedestrian ways. However, the present
invention addresses specific problems encountered, when
seeking to provide a display or advertising image or panel
for application to vehicular or pedestrian surfaces.

20 Evidently, if display panels are to be applied to concrete
or other vehicular or pedestrian surfaces, such panels
will be exposed to wind and rain, and also the adverse
action of wheel-driven dust or water, de-icing salts and
cleaning compounds, and point-loading of a stiletto heel,
25 and must therefore be resistant to attack from such
sources if the panels are to have any reasonable working
life.

It is known to apply road markings e.g. road centre lines,
30 car lanes and driver instructions, such as "halt" or
"slow", but such markings are produced from thermoplastic
materials, are applied in hot form, and require
specialised equipment to apply the markings. They are

also difficult to remove, and in fact removal always leaves some surface damage.

5 It is also known to provide pre-formed rubber segments which are mechanically or adhesively secured to road surfaces to form "traffic calming" humps, and such segments usually bear some painted markings to enhance their visibility.

10 The invention, however, has been developed primarily with a view to provide a flexible display panel or "image" which can be adhesively applied to a vehicular or pedestrian surface using simple pressure contact e.g. using a heavy roller, and which is sufficiently durable to 15 resist degradation or deterioration for an acceptable time period when exposed to ambient weather conditions, and also abrasive attack from vehicle wheels and pedestrians running over the panels, and yet retain acceptable skid values.

20 It is envisaged that the invention will be particularly attractive to owners and operators of vehicle car parks, in that there will be a captive market of car users and 25 pedestrians which can be exposed to advertising material by application of display panels to concrete, asphalt, timber or other vehicle parking and pedestrian surfaces.

In particular, the invention seeks to provide flexible display panels (images) which are sufficiently durable to 30 maintain the overall integrity of the panel for a reasonable period in situ, while at the same time maintaining an acceptable visibility of the displayed information.

According to the invention there is provided a flexible display panel (image) for application to a vehicular or pedestrian surface, said panel being formed by a laminated assembly which comprises:

a fibrous backing layer which is capable of carrying a printed image in order to display any required visual material;

10 a foundation layer united with the backing layer and constituted in such a way that the foundation can adhere the display panel to a concrete or other vehicular or pedestrian surface upon application of downward pressure to the display panel; and

15 a transparent wear and weather resistant top coating layer applied to the upper surface of the backing layer in order to protect the backing layer while rendering visible the printed material on the backing layer.

20 A flexible display panel according to the invention may therefore be printed with any required visual material or information on the upper surface of the fibrous backing layer, and the underlying foundation layer protects the underside of the backing layer while at the same time serving as the sole constituent of the panel which is 25 utilised to adhere the panel to a concrete or other surface.

With regard to the upper surface of the backing layer, the overlying coating layer protects the backing layer from 30 ambient weather conditions, and also renders the panel resistant to wear damage from vehicle wheels or foot traffic, but the cover layer is transparent so that the printed material remains visible.

Preferably to provide visually distinctive advertising or other material, the fibrous backing layer is capable of receiving, and holding substantially permanently, a 5 digital or printed image.

The foundation layer is preferably a bituminous layer, in the sense that it is made of, or includes bitumen, or bitumen-like material (or is adhesively based), and which 10 will preferably be treated in such a way that, in relation to prevailing ambient temperature and conditions, the foundation layer is capable of adhering to the support surface, by diffusion or otherwise, following application of downward pressure e.g. using a heavy roller, to the 15 upper surface of the panel. In addition, the panel should be able thereafter to be capable of remaining adhesively united to or with the support surface, while being exposed to ambient temperatures. In other words, different pre-treatment of the bituminous or adhesive layer will take 20 place according to the anticipated range of ambient temperatures in the intended place of use. As an alternative material for the foundation layer is any suitable adhesive material.

25 In some circumstances, it may be desirable to apply a primer to the support surface and/or to the underside of the foundation layer, to improve adhesion, where necessary, to the support surface.

30 The backing layer is preferably a woven layer of natural and/or synthetic fibres, and optionally with integration of paper compounds.

The coating layer may be made of a material which is water-resistant, and also U.V. resistant. To improve the durability of the panel, and its resistance to abrasive action from vehicle wheels, the coating layer may 5 incorporate glass beads, clear silica beads or opalescent sand. Desirably, the coating layer is provided with reflective properties plus skid resistance.

A preferred embodiment of the flexible display panel 10 (image) according to the invention, for application to a concrete or other vehicular or pedestrian support surface, will now be described in detail, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying schematic cross-sectional 15 illustration.

15

Referring now to the drawing, a flexible display panel (image) according to the invention is designated generally by reference (10) and is illustrated schematically, and applied to a concrete or other vehicular or pedestrian 20 support surface (11), which may be a parking surface or pedestrian access way in a vehicle car park, e.g. a multi-storey car park, a road surface hard standing area or corridor.

25 The panel (10) is formed of a laminated assembly which comprises a fibrous backing layer (12) which is capable of carrying a printed image, preferably a digital image, in order to display any required visual information or material. A bituminous (or adhesive) foundation layer 30 (13) is united with the backing layer (12) and is constituted in such a way that the foundation layer (13) can adhere the display panel (10) to the concrete or other support surface (11) upon application of downward pressure

to the display panel e.g. using a heavy roller i.e. by cold-rolling.

A transparent wear and weather resistant top coating layer 5 (14) is applied to the upper surface of the backing layer (12), and also overlies and protects the printed image (15) while at the same time linking with the foundation layer (13) carried, or actually incorporated into the surface of the backing layer (12). The top coating layer 10 (14) therefore protects the backing layer and the printed image, from both weather conditions, and also from abrasive action of vehicle wheels, or pedestrian traffic running over the display panel. The coating layer also 15 renders the printed material on the backing layer visible, whilst at the same time integrating all component parts.

The foundation layer (13) is a bituminous layer, in the sense that it is made of, or includes bitumen, or bitumen derived constituents, or bitumen-like material, or 20 adhesive compounds. Also, the constituents of the foundation layer (13) will be pre-treated in such a way that, in relation to prevailing ambient temperature and conditions, the foundation layer is capable of adhering to the support surface (11), by diffusion or otherwise, 25 following application of downward pressure by a heavy roller. In addition, the panel (10) is capable thereafter of remaining adhesively united with the support surface (11), while being exposed to ambient temperatures.

30 Evidently, in colder climates, the pre-treatment of the foundation layer (13) will be different from the pre-treatment when the intended location of use of the display panel is in an environment having a warming climate.

In some circumstances, it may be desirable to apply a primer to the support surface (11) and/or to the underside of the foundation layer (13) to improve the adhesion of 5 the display panel (10) to the support surface (10).

The backing layer (12) is a woven layer of natural and/or synthetic fibres, and optionally incorporating paper.

10 The coating layer (14) is made of material which is water resistant, clear and U.V. resistant. To improve durability of the panel overall, and in particular to provide improve resistance to abrasive action from vehicle wheels, the coating layer (14) may incorporate glass 15 beads, clear silica beads, or opalescent sand.

The reader's attention is directed to all papers and documents which are filed concurrently with or previous to this specification in connection with this application and 20 which are open to public inspection with this specification, and the contents of all such papers and documents are incorporated herein by reference.

All of the features disclosed in this specification 25 (including any accompanying claims, abstract and drawings), and/or all of the steps of any method or process so disclosed, may be combined in any combination, except combinations where at least some of such features and/or steps are mutually exclusive.

30

Each feature disclosed in this specification (including any accompanying claims, abstract and drawings), may be replaced by alternative features serving the same,

equivalent or similar purpose, unless expressly stated otherwise. Thus, unless expressly stated otherwise, each feature disclosed is one example only of a generic series of equivalent or similar features.

5

The invention is not restricted to the details of the foregoing embodiment(s). The invention extend to any novel one, or any novel combination, of the features disclosed in this specification (including any accompanying claims, 10 abstract and drawings), or to any novel one, or any novel combination, of the steps of any method or process so disclosed.

CLAIMS:

1. A flexible display panel (image) for application to a vehicular or pedestrian surface, said panel being formed
5 by a laminated assembly which comprises:

a fibrous backing layer which is capable of carrying a printed image in order to display any required visual material;

10 a foundation layer united with the backing layer and constituted in such a way that the foundation can adhere the display panel to a concrete or other vehicular or pedestrian surface upon application of downward pressure to the display panel; and

15 a transparent wear and weather resistant top coating layer applied to the upper surface of the backing layer in order to protect the backing layer while rendering visible the printed material on the backing layer.

2. A flexible display panel as claimed in claim 1, in
20 which the fibrous backing layer is capable of receiving a digital printed image to provide visually distinctive advertising or other material.

25 3. A flexible display panel as claimed in either claim 1 or claim 2, in which the foundation layer is a bituminous layer.

30 4. A flexible display panel as claimed in claim 3, which is treated in such a way that, in relation to prevailing ambient temperatures and conditions, the foundation layer is capable of adhering to the support surface.

5. A flexible display panel as claimed in claim 4, in which the foundation layer is capable of adhering to the support surface by diffusion or otherwise, following application of downward pressure to the upper surface of
5 the panel.

6. A flexible display panel as claimed in claim 5, in which the panel is thereafter capable of remaining adhesively united to or with the support surface, while
10 being exposed to ambient temperatures.

7. A flexible display panel as claimed in claim 3, in which the foundation layer is any suitable adhesive material.

15

8. A flexible display panel as claimed in any preceding claim, in which, in use, a primer is applied to the support surface and/or to the underside of the foundation layer, to improve adhesion to the support surface.

20

9. A flexible display panel as claimed in any preceding claim, in which the backing layer is a woven layer of natural and/or synthetic fibres.

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10. A flexible display panel as claimed in claim 9, in which the backing layer includes paper compounds.

30

11. A flexible display panel as claimed in any preceding claim, in which the coating layer is made of a material which is water-resistant.

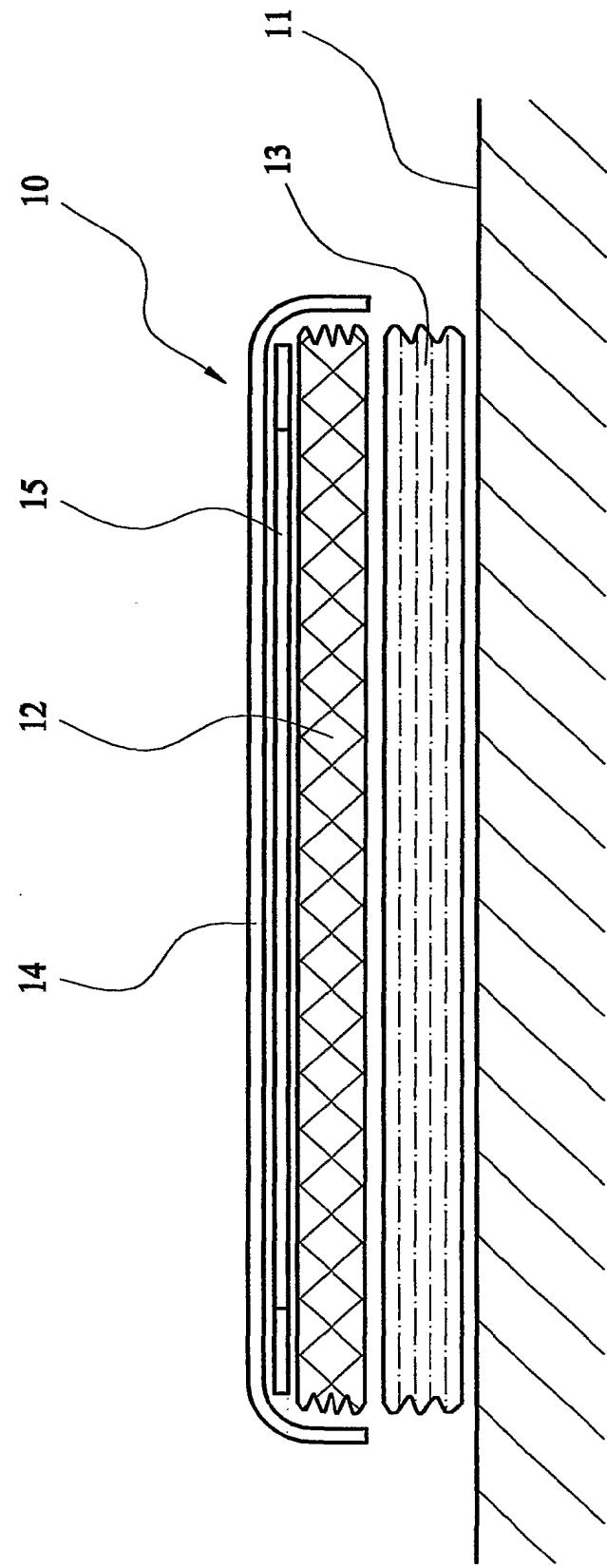
12. A flexible display panel as claimed in claim 11, in which the coating layer is U.V. resistant.

13. A flexible display panel as claimed in any preceding claim, in which the coating layer incorporates glass beads, clear silica beads or opalescent sand.

5

14. A flexible display panel as claimed in any preceding claim, in which the coating layer is provided with reflective properties, together with skid resistance.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

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According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 7 E01F B32B B44C G09F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category °	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 99 44840 A (MINNESOTA MINING & MFG) 10 September 1999 (1999-09-10) the whole document ---	1-7, 11-14 8-10
X	WO 00 24970 A (MINNESOTA MINING & MFG) 4 May 2000 (2000-05-04) the whole document ---	1, 2
Y		8-10
A		4-7, 11-14
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 Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C. Patent family members are listed in annex.

° Special categories of cited documents :

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- *P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

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- *Y* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
- *&* document member of the same patent family

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No
PCT/GB 01/04714

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	GB 1 116 864 A (PERMANITE LTD) 12 June 1968 (1968-06-12) page 2, line 40 – line 66 -----	1, 3-6, 13

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

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